

The Art of Organizing Work (Paris, 26–27 Jun 25)

German Center for Art History, Paris, Jun 26–27, 2025

Deadline: Feb 28, 2025

www.dfk-paris.org/de/node/4020

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The Art of Organizing Work: Structures, Procedures, and Economies of Craft Workshops in the Early 20th Century.

How do artists and craftspeople work together? How do these collaborations affect their respective statuses and the value of their products? How are decisions made during the processes of design and execution? What effects do the particular geographical, political and economic conditions have on the production process, reception and marketing of the art objects created?

These are some of the questions the conference will consider in relation to the period starting from the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1900, which also took stock of the state of arts and crafts production at that time, until the beginning of the Second World War. This period is characterized by the increasing mechanization and automation of the production processes of arts and crafts objects, with established artists increasingly becoming involved in their manufacture. Discussions on the collaboration between the so-called “fine arts” and craft often revolve around the influence of art on craft. Our focus is on the reciprocity of exchange within this cooperation and the discursive intermingling between these two fields. How is work structured and what kinds of organizational forms are found in different types of workshops? How are these related to artistic demands, or to the use and functions of the manufactured objects?

In many avant-garde movements the applied arts played an important socio-cultural and political role. The economic side was often ignored however, for the sake of the requisite social interventions. In what ways do economic and political conditions determine the production processes and the cooperation between art and craft? What role do educational ideals and programs play? How does the educational training in workshops differ from that in art academies, beyond the orientation towards sales? What avant-garde practices found their way into the workshops and how does this affect production? And conversely, how does the knowledge of materials, techniques and processes generated in workshops influence forms of artistic expression?

The conference addresses a diverse range of disciplines including art, design and cultural studies, sociology, and in particular organizational sociology, and the economic sciences, and seeks new perspectives on artistic production at the margins of 'classical modernism'. We welcome contributions on exemplary cases, as well as methodological insights, particularly from the field of working structures, organization and the intermingling of discourses.

Contributions (20 minutes in length) should relate to at least one of the following thematic focus-

es:

- Working structures and processes, design and realization
- Programmatic approaches, economics and marketing
- Discursive intermingling between art and craft, and between the singular and the serial

This English-language conference will take place at the German Center for Art History in Paris (DFK Paris) from June 26-27, 2025. Travel expenses will be reimbursed.

Contribution proposals (300 words) and a short CV should be sent to the address below by February 28, 2025: patricia.fritze@leuphana.de

We also request a first version of the manuscript by June 6, 2025, i.e. three weeks before the conference, for the planned publication, which will be circulated among the contributors in advance.

The final manuscripts (4000-5000 words and max. 8 illustrations) for the publication should be submitted by August 29, 2025.

Concept: Léa Kuhn (ZI München) and Beate Söntgen (Leuphana Universität Lüneburg)

Reference:

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